



Effective Communication Techniques to use with Families

Communication Techniques

1. Lifestyle Advice

Lifestyle Advice – Well Child/ Urgent Visit

- < 1 minute
- Children not currently overweight or obese

To stay healthy and energized Eat & Play the 5-2-1 Way Everyday

- *5 helpings of fruits or vegetables*
- *2 hours or less screen time*
- *1 hour physical activity & play*
- *0 sugar drinks and more water and low-fat milk.*

Who Do You Communicate With?

2 - 5 Years Old

- Communicate with parent
- Child in room

6 - 12 Years Old

- Communicate with parent or both
- The first encounter consider taking parent to your office to discuss in private first

Over 12 Years Old

- Communicate with teen or both
- The first encounter consider having parent leave exam room first

Brief Negotiation Skills

Particularly effective for Contemplative/Ambivalent

Patients

- Ask open ended questions
- Reflective listening
- Summarize
- Clinician Style: empathic, accepting, collaborative

Cognitive Behavior Skills

For patients ready and willing to make change

- Develop awareness of eating habits, activity & parenting behavior
- Identification of problem behaviors
- Problem solving and modification of problem behaviors
- Weekly goal setting for children and parents on dietary, activity and self-esteem/parenting goals
- Positive reward systems
- Record keeping and weight checks



2. Brief Focused Advice

Brief Focused Advice

- <3 minutes
- Children who are overweight or obese

Step # 1: Engage the Patient / Parent

- *Can we take a few minutes together to discuss your health and weight?*
- *How do you feel or what do you think about your health and weight?*

Step # 2: Share Information (optional)

- *Your weight is increasing faster than your height.*
- *Your current weight puts you at risk for developing heart disease and diabetes. What do you make of this?*
- *What are your ideas for working toward a healthy weight?*

Step # 3: Ask Permission / Make a Key Advice Statement

- *Do you mind if I share the recommendations with you?*

Step # 4: Arrange for Follow up

- *Would you be interested in more information on ways to reach a healthier weight? AND / OR*
- *Let's set up an appointment in __ weeks to discuss*

3. Brief Negotiation & Cognitive Behavior Skills

Brief Negotiation & Cognitive Behavior Skills

- 10+ minutes: single or multiple sessions
- Children who are overweight or obese

Step #1: Open the Encounter

Ask Permission

- *Would you be willing to spend a few minutes discussing your health/weight?*
Are you interested in discussing ways to stay healthy and energized?

Ask an Open-Ended Question - Listen - Summarize

- *What do you think / How do you feel about your health/ weight?*
- *What have you tried so far to work toward a healthier weight?*

Share BMI / Weight / Risk Factors (optional)

- *Your current weight puts you at risk for developing heart disease and diabetes.*
- Ask for the patient's interpretation: *"What do you make of this?"*
- Add your own interpretation or advice as needed AFTER eliciting the patient's / parent's response

Step #2: Negotiate the Agenda

- *There are a number of ways to achieve a healthy weight. Some ideas include Eat & Play the 5-2-1-Way*
 - *5 helpings of fruits or vegetables*
 - *2 hours or less screen time*
 - *1 hour physical activity & play*
 - *0 sugar drinks and more water and low-fat milk.*
- *Is there one of these you'd like to discuss further today? Or perhaps you have another idea that isn't listed here.*

Step #3: Assess Readiness

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Importance/Confidence

*On a scale from 0 to 10, how ready are you to consider **[option chosen above]***

- Straight question: *Why a 5?*
- Backward question: *Why a 5 and not a 3?*
- Forward question: *What would it take to move you from a 5 to a 7?*

Step #4: Explore Ambivalence

- a.) Ask a pair of questions to help the patient explore the pros and cons of the issue
- *What are the things you like about ____? **AND** What are the things you don't like about ____? **OR***
 - *What are the advantages of keeping things the same? **AND** What are the advantages of making a change?*
- b.)
- Summarize Ambivalence: *Let me see if I understand what you've told me so far.....*
(begin with reasons for maintaining the status quo, end with reasons for making a change)
 - Ask: *Did I get it all? / Did I get it right?*

cont...

Step # 5 : Tailor the Intervention

Stage of Readiness	Key Questions
Not Ready 0 – 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raise Awareness• Elicit Change Talk• Advise and Encourage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Would you be interested in knowing more about reaching a healthy weight?</i>• <i>How can I help?</i>• <i>What might need to be different for you to consider a change in the future?</i>
Unsure 4 – 6 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate Ambivalence• Elicit Change Talk• Build Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Where does that leave you now?</i>• <i>What do you see as your next steps?</i>• <i>What are you thinking / feeling at this point?</i>• <i>Where does _____ fit into your future?</i>
Ready 7 – 10 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen Commitment• Elicit Change Talk• Facilitate Action Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Why is this important to you now?</i>• <i>What are your ideas for making this work?</i>• <i>What might get in the way? How might you work around the barriers?</i>• <i>How might you reward yourself along the way?</i>

Step #6: Close the Encounter

- Summarize: *Our time is almost up. Let's take a look at what you've worked through today...*
- Show Appreciation / Acknowledge willingness to discuss change: *Thank you for being willing to discuss your weight.*
- Offer advice, emphasize choice, express confidence: *I strongly encourage you to be more physically active. The choice to increase your activity, of course, is entirely yours. I am confident that if you decide to be more active you can be successful.*
- Confirm next steps and arrange for follow up: *Are you able to come back in 1 month so we can continue to work together?*

****Adapted from Regional Health Education – Kaiser Permanente**

Northern California and Maine Youth Overweight Collaborative

